

EXHIBIT A



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[Office of the President] Important F&M update – March 18, 2020

Office of the President <president@fandm.edu>

Wed, Mar 18, 2020 at 2:55 PM

Reply-To: president@fandm.edu

To: students-admin@fandm.edu, Office of the President Announcements <Announce-president@fandm.edu>

Dear Students and Colleagues,

Our world has shifted enormously since this time last week, both locally and globally. When I announced on March 11 that F&M would provide online instruction for two weeks following spring break, my primary concerns were the health and safety of the community and preserving the option to resume normal functioning for as much of the semester as possible. The possibility of resuming has now evaporated. Therefore, after much discussion with our leadership teams, I have made the painful decision that **F&M will finish spring semester with online instruction only, and we will reduce to a minimum the population staying on campus.**

We all know how much is lost when our students, faculty, and professional staff colleagues cannot engage side-by-side in the rich process of holistic education, and I was loath to let that go while there was a chance that we could regroup and finish together. In the last few days, however, new guidelines from the State of Pennsylvania and from the federal government have restricted how we can meet and what we can do, and limited the commercial and social opportunities in our larger environment. Yesterday, the City of Lancaster pronounced a state of emergency. If we brought students back after break, life on campus would not be our usual lively mix of activities, performances, athletic contests, hands-on research, meetings, artistic practice, Common Hour, forum discussions, House breakfasts, and the like. More importantly, it could risk the health of our community, on campus and off. We are obligated to respect the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and to do everything we can to slow the risk of coronavirus community spread. To do anything else would be to ignore our responsibilities to the F&M community and to the city and county surrounding us.

Teams have been at work to prepare for such a turning point as a precaution, and now that advance planning will stand us in good stead. Detailed information will be available shortly, but for now, please note the following:

- Students currently off campus should remain off campus until we can send instructions for an orderly process to return to gather their belongings.
- Given the changing health circumstances in Lancaster county, we will hold another petition process to determine which students will be allowed to stay in residence. Instructions for that petition process will be forthcoming.
- Students who are currently in, or returning to, College-approved off-campus housing should not expect to come to campus – we will be able to maintain only minimal services, in compliance with current restrictions. Please take that limitation to heart. We are all individually accountable for sticking to the rules and avoiding contact with others.

Given CDC recommendations against public gatherings of 50 or more people for at least the next eight weeks, **we are forced to postpone our Commencement ceremony.** This postponement will be a considerable disappointment to our seniors, and I share your frustration. We are deeply committed to celebrating your achievements and enabling you to celebrate with one another. We will choose another date and design a special graduation that is tailor-made for F&M's terrific Class of 2020.

Professional staff should expect to keep working, whether remotely or on campus, for the few who have arranged with their supervisors to do so, in keeping with my emails of recent days.

We are not by nature an online institution, but the faculty have risen to the challenge in wonderful ways and have spent their spring “break” moving to an online platform. Our expert and dedicated ITS colleagues have been working night and day to support, instruct, and inspire. Professors, students, professional staff, and administrators will each have our own learning curve, but we will make sure that students are able to finish their courses with all the support of our superb and highly dedicated educators. The entire community, including alumni and families, will help in myriad other ways.

Please know that this has been a very difficult decision to reach. We are a close-knit community, and personal interaction is a critical element of the F&M experience. We are fully committed to our distinctive model of the liberal arts. At the same time, it also behooves us to prioritize safety in this time of risk and uncertainty.

Even as you meet your own needs, please extend kindness and generosity of spirit to others. Crisis reveals true character. Ben Franklin's many exhortations about honorable conduct come to mind, among them this sentence: "When you're good to others, you're best to yourself." Crisis is also, like necessity, the mother of invention. We are a community of smart, resourceful and inventive people. If we rise to the challenge and break the mold of the everyday, we may find new modes of learning and teaching, collaboration and cooperation, flexibility and creation, that push us even closer to the realization of everything that is best about F&M.

My thanks to you all for embracing that goal.

Barbara K. Altmann

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